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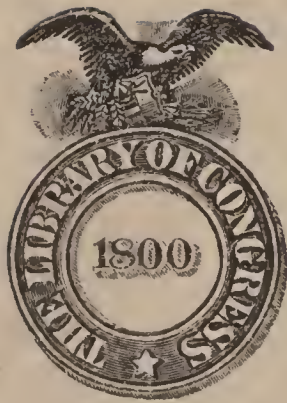
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INFINITISM

OR A VIEW OF

THE INFINITE



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INFINITISM

OR A VIEW OF

THE INFINITE

BY IRVING WINSOR
GREENVILLE, R. I.



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Address all orders to Irving Winsor,
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PS.—One dollar seems a large price for a small book, but I make this standing offer: Anyone thinking on religion 30 years, who will write the results in bookform, can have a dollar for the book from me at any time.

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Written Jan. 12th, 1916, by Irving Winsor.

PREFACE.

When a person in his whole life writes only one thing it is perhaps excusable on his part, and will be of interest to the reader to know something of the writer. I was born Nov. 20th, 1859, in the town of Smithfield, Providence County, State of Rhode Island, United States of America.

My ancestors were the early settlers of the State of Rhode Island. At least four or five of them were pastors of the First Baptist Church of Providence, R. I., the first church in the State and the first Baptist Church in America, previous to 1776. Their names are Roger Williams, Chad Brown, Rev. Samuel Winsor, 1st, and Rev. Samuel Winsor, 2nd. The place of my birth is about one and a half miles about north of northeast from Greenville. The farm had been owned by my grandfather, Andrew Winsor, and my father's family moved from there to a farm called the Zibe Smith farm, about one-half mile north of Greenville, on the 4th anniversary of my birth.

My mother died the 5th of June, 1867, when I was seven and a half years old. I was converted when seventeen or eighteen years of age, having made a profession in Providence when Moody was there holding meetings, and I soon united with the First Free Baptist Church of Smithfield during the pastorate of Rev. Arthur Given, who also baptized me. After one term of school at East Greenwich Academy, I began a

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regular classical course at New Hampton, N. H., where I was most of the time from 1879 to 1884, when I went to Bates Theological School, Lewiston, Me., in 1884 and graduated in 1889.

Nov. 1st, 1889, I became State Missionary for the Minnesota Yearly Meeting of Free Baptists. This relation was discontinued Jan. 1st, 1890, when I became pastor of the church at Diamond Bluff, Wis. I was there a year or two, then went to Monticello, Wis., as pastor. I left there and went on a half section of new land in Clark County, Wis., near Neillsville, where I stayed several years. I next went to Delevan, Minn., where I stayed as pastor a few months. I came back to Rhode Island about 1900, where I have since resided, preaching some, farming some, and peddling almost exclusively for the last five or six years.

The views I hold on religious subjects have been held in much the same form as I now write them, for several years. I did not intend to write them out for publication until I was sixty years old, I am admonished to write now rather than to wait longer. Some one might say that it is already too late, and I would agree with him if I were to think out and put in order the contents of Infinitism. But it is already formulated in my mind and has been practically as I now attempt to write it for several years, and although an impaired mind might not be able to originate and put in form these ideas, still one somewhat defective might nevertheless be sufficiently clear to write out what was originally thought out under more favorable circumstances.

There are many features, some quite interesting, concerning the writing of this book, but as

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brevity and precision is desired in the completed work so that it will be acceptable to the general reader, we will forego all further allusion to the circumstances.



INTRODUCTION.

As far as I know, all religious teaching of whatever name or nature runs back to some more or less ancient books, creeds, traditions, etc.

Infinitism does not propose to be perfect and complete, for to begin and finish a complete system of religion would be asking too much of any one person. But I do believe it possible for even one mind which is free from prejudice and from the effects of previous instruction to so weigh the truth from all quarters as at least to form a self-satisfying belief. As the word Infinitism implies, it is open to amendment and criticism, to be added to and taken from, as time, knowledge, experience and thought may prove advisable.

Infinitism takes into consideration all that we are able to comprehend and takes cognizance of all the teachings of Christianity as well as all other religions. Infinitism is offered for what it is worth. If its teachings are true, it will revolutionize beliefs and put religion, as it deserves to be, in the first place in the thoughts and lives of all.

Infinitism has no argument or controversy with anything. It simply states its belief and leaves the reader to consider, and if he at once does not come to the same conclusion which I have reached after twenty or thirty years of thought and careful consideration, I have no fault to find. Every one at one time thought the earth flat and some still hold that view, but the arguments in favor of its being a globe were not readily received. In religion there has been no great change for two thousand years. Why stand still in this great essential?

CHAPTER I.

THE ORIGIN OF THINGS.

There must be some vehicle or medium in and through and by which any and all things operate.

This necessitates the eternal existence of matter in some form.

The existence of matter necessitates some form or manner of existence.

That this existence and manner of being is conformed to rule and law is necessary.

Being a part and parcel of all matter and thus subject and in harmony with those laws, we naturally see and comprehend them to be good and proper.

The highest development of matter as far as we are able to judge is man.

And the highest development of man is the spiritual man born from above, or born again, as often stated.

And that all this is a natural, systematic, orderly development is the great Teaching of Infinitism.

CHAPTER II.

NATURE OF TEACHINGS.

Human observation aided by the instruments of man's invention appear to show that matter is practically all of one nature and made up of the same elements, whether near by and capable of being handled and analyzed, or whether existing at the remotest bounds of our limits of observation. That matter exists in some parts of the universe in far different conditions than in other

parts leads us to the conclusion that matter changes conditions, and such changes are progressive at all times.

All of these laws are not perhaps comprehended, but those of gravity, attraction, etc., are easily discerned. That these things tend toward an ultimate good is a proof not so much of an overruling power as to universal tendency of all things to conform to the great underlying tendency and nature of things.

From what we call the lower has developed the higher forms of existence.

It is evident man with his intelligence is the highest development known to us. It would appear that Jesus Christ was perhaps the first person who entered into the highest development up to his time, but we do believe that he was perfectly natural in his development and growth.

What was true in Christ's case as an individual became true generally on the day of Pentecost, and what was true then has always developed when man has lived for right and righteousness according to his best impressions.

All of this is a natural development without supernatural influences and may be experienced by any one who will live up to his best convictions of duty and justice.

(I wrote to this place Jan. 12th, 1916.)

Infinitism arrives at the same conclusion, and the ultimate results are the same as far as the facts of the case are concerned, as in the most advanced experiences in Christianity. But they are reached by a direct route and without resort to the introduction of the supernatural, miracles, or the work of imagination, which have held so important a place in religion up to the present time. There are those even at this late date that

believe that a religion without the supernatural could not be believed; whereas I believe that it is high time that we have a religion where facts rather than fancies predominate.

The Bible story of creation is all right for one way of accounting for the origin of things, and has been believed by many implicitly, and considering its ancient origin is very good; but it is not to be believed for several reasons, First, because it takes for granted the existence of a supreme being capable of speaking and a thing coming into existence out of nothing. Second, the six days' work of creation are incredible. Third, the making of woman out of Adam's rib is incredible. In contrast with these Infinitism teaches the existence of matter as eternal, and when we can see at the same time all degrees of the change from the clouds in the milky way down to the solid earth on which we walk, we do have a clue to the origin of things before our eyes. But, be the origin as it may, the fact of existence and things as they are, are to be taken into account; and here is where Infinitism compares favorably with anything previously known.

Infinitism provides ample time for the processes and changes which appear slow, but when eternity is allowed, these great changes are easily accomplished. Remains of prehistoric animals, plants, etc., compared with those existant to-day reveal changes and development suggestive of changes, which might account for the development of all things as they are out of some primitive and original substance which of necessity is eternal.

That this original substance had in it originally the elements from which all existant things were produced is easily comprehended. This would

imply an inherent principle in all things capable of bringing about infinite change, but the changes are invariably for the advancement and as we comprehend the betterment of all things according to an infinite tendency and order of things.

Such we believe to be the order of creation and the development of all things.

The foregoing order and nature of things would seem to account for all things, including man, but man it would appear, although capable of indefinite development and improvement, which some have availed themselves of, whereas many when confronted with those things prefer to remain as they are, conform to lower ideals and in some cases, after acquiring quite a high standard of excellence, become degenerate. This does not prove anything against the general influence and trend of Infinitism.

Infinitism embraces all things, from ages gone by to ages yet to come. A generation, a century, or a notion may fail to follow the upward and onward dictates of Infinitism.

The teachings of Christ were the climax in his day. The early disciples, actuated by the high order of life and living, thus influenced and enthused humanity. Christianity since then has far departed from the plain, homely adherence to the life of duty, and to-day Christianity, although it holds sway over a great part of the world, has so lost the spirit and impetus of conformity to the cardinal principles of truth and righteousness that we find ourselves in this second decade of the twentieth century no farther advanced than many of the first century were.

Infinitism, of course, does not make any provision for the incarnation, miracles or resurrection of Christ, believing Christ to be simply man,

and would claim the prerogative of criticising his teachings the same as those of any other teacher. The climax of his teachings was perhaps "Whatsoever things ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Sublime and holy as these general teachings are, still we find that as many men wish things which are not for their best good, some other standard is better, as far as they at least are concerned. An extreme case of one desiring for himself and, according to Christ's teaching, what he would have conferred upon others, was to lie in bed with a rubber pipe attached to a barrel of whiskey so that he might have all the whiskey he wanted at all times. This, of course, is an extreme case of which we hope there are few, but it shows conclusively that what one would desire for himself would not be a safe rule in respect to what one should bestow upon another.

Infinitism would teach what is right and proper and just do; but what is right and proper and just? some will say, and this is the great value and virtue of Infinitism. It believes that we are so much a part and parcel of all things that it is given to each to know what is right, each one for himself. This perhaps sounds too liberal, but one who follows it will have all he can attend to and will receive the greatest of recompense.

Written to this point Jan. 13th, 1916.

Although Infinitism does not wish to argue or contend for this or that point or question as held by the Christian Church, still to bring things up for comparison the Apostles' Creed as an index of Christian belief may be compared with Infinitism.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty."

Infinitism teaches that there was not first of all an Infinite person, but believes that matter existed eternally and by development at last developed mind, and that mind in its own development has had various conceptions of many things, among them the method by which things became and do exist. Hence various conceptions of things; among other conceptions a conception of a God.

Infinitism has no conception of God as an infinite person, but would believe that there might at the present time exist some combination or bringing together of thinking which might exercise some influence over the mind of the individual. Thus the highest development of mind is an outcome or product of matters. Highest development rather than some infinite person was the cause and occasion of everything—"Maker of heaven and earth."

Our conception already expressed deprives God of any existence, or prerogatives which would make such a work possible or believable.

"And in Jesus Christ his Son our Lord." Jesus Christ was born of woman as any other child is born, but became an exceptional man, probably the first to be born from above, at least the first so born as to, in a great measure, have some conception of what had happened in his own case and how it was brought about in himself and had the ability to convey that knowledge to others. "His ambition was to always do the will of his Father which was in Heaven." In other words, his purpose was to do right, according to his convictions of duty. Some might think this was depriving Christ of His prerogatives. But to me there is no greater ideal of Christ than

that of a genuine man doing what he did as a man.

“Conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.” Both of which were impossible.

“Suffered under Pontius Pilate.” He most surely did.

“Was crucified, dead and buried.” Certainly.

“The third day he rose from the dead.” We do not believe he rose from the dead, but we do believe that after his death he was able to impress himself upon the living. To what extent this was done or is possible is difficult to understand, but probably we have exaggerated reports, but, on the other hand, it is hard for us to comprehend to what extent such a highly developed spiritual being might be able to communicate with those with whom he walked and talked and communed on such intimate terms.

“And sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.” All of which is imaginary.

“From whence he will come and judge the quick and the dead.” Perhaps so, but practically incredible.

“I believe in the Holy Ghost.” The Holy Ghost is another name for the spirit or influence which worketh for righteousness, the main spring of Infinitism and of any religion which is spiritual and has any virtue in it.

“The Holy Catholic Church.”

Yes, we believe in a Holy Universal Church. Infinitism points to a time when righteousness shall fill the earth, the good time coming.

“The Communion of Saints.” Immaterial.

“The Forgiveness of Sin.” Infinitism does not believe in sin as generally held or believed.

Those things, which are natural and demanded

by our being, cannot be sins as usually termed. No intelligence can censure us for being in harmony with our nature. But, on the other hand, Infinitism inspires, teaches and leads forever upward and onward to those things which ultimately supplant and counteract those things which are of less importance, natural and perhaps sensual.

"The resurrection of the body." Impossible and unnecessary.

But this does not preclude an existence after death, but of that existence we have no knowledge and we have no particular concern. Infinitism would make the most of this life and stand in absolute readiness for whatever is coming.

"The life everlasting." Almost incredible, but still there is in Infinitism, all that there is in the highest development of Christianity having the new birth, being born from above puts us upon a sure footing for whatever is coming, to the best here, and hereafter.

Commenced here Jan. 28th, Thursday, 9 A. M.

There can be no modern consideration of religious subjects which does not seriously and devoutly consider what is known as the Sermon on the Mount Mathew, Chapters 5-6-7. They are the teachings of a religious enthusiast of about thirty years of age. My opinion is another thirty years of experience and contact with the world would have caused him to have been more practical, but in spite of our criticism, the Sermon on the Mount will continue in the future, as it has in the past, to be the never failing fountain from which any and all who hunger or thirst after righteousness may receive a satisfying portion.

It is one of the virtues of Infinitism that it

gathers truth and beauty from every source, and no greater source ever existed for such supplies than the Sermon on the Mount.

When we consider such things in their true light and appropriate such mines of truth and wisdom, we appreciate the fact that, whereas Infinitism appropriates the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount among other truths, Infinitism must still be greater than the Sermon on the Mount, because it prizes and respects all truth therein contained, plus whatever other truth may be acquired from other sources.

With these considerations uppermost in our minds, we proceed to consider the Sermon on the Mount as the most sacred and sublime teaching ever promulgated by man, but being, as we believe, the teachings of a man, they are subject to criticism, correction and to be emphasized and expounded with thoughtful consideration by another man after two thousand years, mindful of the fact that I will have to do remarkably well to have my comments and consideration of these sublime truths considered or thought upon two years hence, to say nothing of how they will stand two thousand years hence.

Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.

Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Infinitism rejoices in these gracious words and if my whole enterprise falls short of its plan or ideal Infinitism will be forever grateful that there were such truths as the foregoing to present, and that Infinitism in some degree helped bring them to the attention of some more people than would have known them were Infinitism not written. I would not infer that every thing written in the Beatitudes are beyond correction and not liable to be misunderstood, but anyone who receives and accepts Infinitism as a whole would have sense enough to comprehend the excellence, beauty and sublime import of the Beatitudes just as they stand may they abide forever.

Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt hath lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? An ever pertinent question and if the salt had not lost its savor, Infinitism would never have been written.

For verily I say unto you till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.

A too strong expression of confidence in the law. Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. This statement is as true to-day as ever.

Whosoever shall say thou fool shall be in danger of hell fire. This contains two terrible assumptions which are not true but which show Christ's estimate of things, His belief in the sin of censure and in hell fire, which is erroneous.

A reconciliation between brethren make the offering of service to God acceptable then as now.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already with her in his heart.

This is one of the most comprehensive of the over righteous conceptions of Christ. It might have passed two thousand years ago, but hardly in this day and generation when dress or lack of dress is so conspicuous.

Swear not at all. Probably another idealistic conception but one which is far beyond our general experience. But how very nice it would be if yes and no were the rule rather than the exception as at present.

That ye resist not evil but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also.

Very impracticable and no good can come from it. Perhaps it might do some good at some times but we can not practice it generally.

Give to him that asketh of thee and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away. Impractical but still a hint along the line of interest in humanity in general.

Love your enemies, bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.

I have an idea that this is perhaps the climax of Christian virtues. I do not know as we can by so doing become children of our Father which is in heaven, but I do believe that such a frame of mind may sometimes be attained and that the result is very beneficial.

How great a teacher was Jesus Christ is well illustrated when the foundation sermon of his kingdom prove so beneficial and helpful two thousand years after they were uttered. Read the 5th, 6th and 7th chapters of Mathew often. The righteousness set forth therein is ideal and worthy of our endeavor. It is the same old righteousness which Christ preached that Infinitism insists upon to-day as our only hope. Righteousness cannot be delegated or appropriated from one to another.

Our own righteousness will enable us to know the better and higher life and give us peace of mind and tranquillity of spirit. Christianity, whatever might have been its original virtues, has so far deteriorated and so much stress and emphasis has been laid upon different features of it by different sects and denominations that we are so far away from the original teachings, and those original teachings were so far short of the truth that nothing short of radical revision, reconstruction and reorganization can bring about

that righteousness in the masses of humanity which will resuscitate, reclaim and rejuvenate humanity.

The Ten Commandments, regardless of their origin, are the oldest and probably the best expression of those fundamental principles which were early recognized by humanity. That Moses compiled them or originated them does not detract from their value. That he endeavored to have them accepted as coming from the hand of God is nothing against the Ten Commandments, but is a token of his foresight in trying and succeeding in making many generations to believe them as coming directly from God.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. This implies first a desire to get away from the idea of many gods and, second, to substantiate a belief in one God. Both of which are not believed by Infinitism. The one God idea was quite compatible with most ancient Jewish beliefs, but when humanity became more advanced and had higher conceptions, we find the idea of God advancing and the Father, Son and Holy Spirit conception of three persons and one God was the highest conception along that line until the conception respecting God which is advanced by Infinitism which will be somewhat elucidated in another place. This is all I will say on this subject here.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

This is an attempt to still further impress the idea of a God upon humanity. To what extent this commandment has succeeded was evident in Christ's time by his injunction of Swear not at

all, and also by our own habits of almost universal profanity in our own day.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

This shows one of the first movements of humanity toward a better condition, a condition which has not been realized, but is still the hope of humanity.

Honor thy father and thy mother.

Another of those fundamental things which has always marked the advance of humanity whenever and wherever any advance has been made.

Thou shalt not kill.

Wherever humanity has advanced, human life has become more precious, and it is a proof of our degenerate times both the number of murders and the unprecedented number of murders in the great war of our present time.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Another proof of our degenerate times when adultery and divorce are so prevalent and sanctioned by so many. Purity of life must prevail if Infinitism prevails.

Thou shalt not steal.

How about that? Does not this old law ring clear and true as ever? How much would be accomplished toward the betterment of humanity if honesty prevailed? There never will be much development from our present state until the word, "Let him that stole steal no more," is obeyed.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Infinitism would gladly place this law upon

the front page of its teachings, for what robs humanity of its peace more than a lack of observance of this rule of life.

Thou shalt not covet.

How often our lives are made bitter by this spirit. We ought to covet earnestly the best things.

The true import of the giving of the law by Moses is brought out quite forcibly by the immediate context, as follows:

And all the people saw the thunderings and the lightnings and the noise of the trumpets, and the mountain smoking, and when the people saw it they removed and stood afar off.

And they said unto Moses: Speak thou with us and we will hear: But let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people: Fear not, for God has come to prove you and that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. And the people stood afar off and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

The law is none the less valuable because of the thick darkness where God was. But it is a fair sample of most of the teachings respecting God. They are dependent upon the thunder, the lightning and the thick darkness. These remarks signify Infinitism's regard and respect for the law, but I would endeavor to rob the law of its smoke and lightnings, which have been dwelt upon with the presence of the unseen and feared God, much to the detriment of the law itself.

Any consideration of religious truth, however condensed, which would not take account of what is known as dogmatic theology or what is generally held, would be incomplete, and by tak-

ing these up in their regular order we will arrive at the truth of the matter.

FIRST

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

These are the Old and New Testaments. They were written by holy men, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and contain God's revealed will to man. They are a sufficient and infallible guide in religious faith and practice.

Such is the orthodox statement. Although they contain much truth and many sublime sentiments, they were completed nearly two thousand years ago, and a man of equal devotion to-day should receive more ample conceptions of God, commensurate with his advanced development of mind and spirit.

SECOND.

BEING AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

The Scriptures teach that there is only one true and Living God, who is a Spirit, self-existent, eternal, immutable, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, independent, good, wise, holy, just and merciful, the creator, preserver and governor of the universe, the Redeemer, Saviour, Sanctifier and Judge of men, and the only proper object of divine worship.

Such is the general conception of God as set forth in the Scriptures. I do not believe any person who is an observer can agree with this presentation. Theologians explain that the mode of his existence is a subject far above the understanding of man. Finite beings can not comprehend him. There is noth-

ing in the universe that can justly represent him, for there is none like him. He is the fountain of all perfection and happiness. He is glorified by the whole inanimate creation and is worthy to be loved and served by all intelligences.

Such is the general presentation of this subject. But as long as it is admitted that it is a subject beyond the understanding of man, it is obvious that from their point of view at least any presentation of the subject is nothing more or less than guesswork.

Infinitism teaches that God, if we apply that name, is the last and not the first, that as the more exalted follows after the less exalted thing or experience.

God is the compilation or bringing together of all spiritual beings of which the spiritual man is a factor or part, and as such has an influence upon the spiritual combination and is influenced thereby. This idea appears to me to be consistent and agreeable to the sentiment of some of the last uttered Scriptural expressions, such as, first that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual.

The idea of an infinite being creating everything, knowing everything, from the beginning, etc., is not only inconceivable, but impossible, as there must be some vehicle or substance by and through which even the Spirit must work.

DIVINE GOVERNMENT AND PROVIDENCE.

God exercises a providential care and superintendence over all his creatures, governs

the world in wisdom and mercy, according to the testimony of his word.

God endowed man with the power of free choice and governs him by moral laws and motives, and this power of free choice is the exact measure of his responsibility.

All events are present with God from everlasting to everlasting; but his knowledge of them does not in any sense cause them, nor does he decree all events which he knows will occur.

The question naturally arises if God exercises care and supervision over all his creatures, how is it that so much is done contrary to all human sense of what is right and proper, and if finite beings see such lack of righteous administration infinite wisdom and goodness would necessitate much better administration of affairs.

There is no such supreme being and supreme administration. Infinitism teaches a universal development from the inferior to the superior, and whenever we see lack of progress and development it is a living to the lower ideals and conformity to lower standards. Some human beings are not very highly developed, and none have arrived at perfection or a point at which they do not perceive still higher ideals and more advanced positions. Infinitism provides for that superior life and experience of the higher life and the new birth, but even this is only a degree of life, joy and efficiency, of which there is no limit, and everything short of it is simply a living to a lower ideal and conception than the possible.

CREATION.

God created the world and all things that it contains for his own pleasure and glory and the enjoyment of his creatures. If this were so, then there has been a great mistake made, for how can a wise and good being have pleasure and receive to himself glory from the works of many men, and how do his creatures get enjoyment from them in many instances?

The angels were created by God to glorify him and obey his commandments. Those who have kept their first estate he employs in ministering blessings to the heirs of salvation and executing his judgments upon the world. I do not think that we have any reliable proof that there is such a thing as an angel. God created man, consisting of a material body and a thinking, rational soul. He was made in the image of God to glorify his Maker. Man is the only judge of his origin. No knowledge of his origin has been given to him from outside of himself. Some have thought this thing and some that, and the story of a revelation from some superior and exterior source has been quite generally adopted, but it is visionary and incredible man is left to draw his own conclusions and to judge for himself. That there should be various ideas is but natural, but knowledge from outside himself and his own observations are not reliable. Of course this is throwing away much which has been generally believed as fact, but the sooner we put away all false theories and realize that man is a development and that he is the best judge of himself which exists and governs himself

accordingly the better it will be for him now and for those who are to come after him. The idea that man was created upright, preferring to do righteousness, and was tempted by an outside influence and fell, satan and hell are ingrafted into the theory to account for sin in the world, whereas sin is the conformity to our present and prevalent nature and habits rather than an adherence to and practice of those things which appeal to us as the better course of life. But the conformity to the lower is just as natural and can not legitimately imply any moral turpitude or sin.

The Scriptures teach that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, born of a virgin without human intervention. This is unbelievable and is the beginning of several fallacies: First, The incarnation or God becoming man. Second. The atonement of Christ being a means or reconciliation between God and man.

Incarnations were believed in in ancient times, but it is hard to believe and harmonize. The atonement is in theory even faulty, to say nothing about its reality. It is said that there is no theory of the atonement against which valid objection can not be made. If this is true, how groundless is our faith when such a vital point as the atonement can not be held and advocated without knowing that we are holding and advocating as truth what we all know to be at least not free from being subject to unfavorable criticism even from those who believe implicitly in an atonement. This point, namely, that there is no theory respecting the atonement but which can be refuted and valid objections made against it, is what made the author of Infinitism begin

to advocate and to construct a theory against which no valid objection can be brought. Of course the atonement occupies a central place in the chain of links which make up the Theological System as held by all Christian denominations alike, but, regardless of this fact, if it is not true, the sooner we begin to fabricate a theology without it the better. The old theology, briefly stated, would be about like this, which, although brief, is probably about as held in general: First, an infinite and eternal God, who is a Spirit by his word, created out of nothing all things and made man out of the dust of the earth. He was perfect and holy. From a rib out of man's body the first woman was made. This woman tempted him to sin, and in view of his sin all of his descendants are prone to sin, and God seeing man's condition, gave his Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer the penalty due to all sinners, and that said sinners accepting Christ as their Saviour, are accepted to favour of God, and are enabled to live a holy life here and are heirs of salvation hereafter.

IN CONTRAST WITH THESE VIEWS.

Infinitism teaches, first, the eternal existence of matter with inherent tendencies, which may be called the nature of things. All that we see or know is the result, outcome or product of such matter, subjected or influenced by said inherent and eternal tendencies.

Inanimate and animate nature are developments along this line. Eternity furnishes time enough and changes ever active furnish the power, and the eternal aggressive, upward and onward trend of things furnishes the mo-

tive. It is God in nature, if we wish to use the word. Man is perhaps the highest development of which we have any certain knowledge, and the spiritual man, yielding still to the law and nature of his being, becomes an ingredient or part and parcel of the sum total of all intelligences and makes in an aggregate a spiritual centre or consummation of intelligence which we may with some degree of conformity to the general idea call God. This would make God to be the last and the result of all previous developments rather than the originator of all things. This climax or sum total of all intelligences is capable of being influenced by each factor which makes up the whole and in turn is able to exercise an influence upon each unit of the consolidated intelligence. There are stages and degrees all along the line from the lowest to the highest development, and Infinitism regards Jesus of Nazareth as the first one of whom we have any knowledge, who both experienced the highest development and was able to inculcate the principles by which it was developed in others, and as far as we are able to comprehend this life of obedience to the highest behests of the laws of our being constitute the climax of our present existence.

Christ's statement that "I do always those things that are well pleasing in his sight" was the mainspring of his activities, and in so doing he set the example to all who have come after him. His life was so far superior to all of his day that he was deified by his followers; but, best of all, he was obeyed by them in that they remained together in prayer after his death until they received a just conception

of the higher or spiritual life and set on foot an impetus to life and its meaning which has been the ideal ever since. This ideal as expressed by Christ as always doing the will of his Father is identical with the precept of Infinitism. Obey your best impressions. Christ might have believed in a personal God who communicated his will to Christ, and some such ideal or conception largely prevails at present and has in the past. But Infinitism teaches that there is in everything a law of its being, growth and development. Conformity to such a law is the natural and consistent duty of all things. Whenever this idea has become prevalent in a community it has been productive of the greatest advancement to humanity. These times of refreshing revivals or awakenings are but the logical and natural result of a conformity to this side of life and practice. That humanity comes to a standstill or even retrogrades at times is not strange, because these ideals and better things which are ever present and easy to be discerned as the best and most advisable thing to do, is almost invariably an occasion for the use of extraordinary acts of devotion and conformity to some more lofty ideal than that which has already been attained.

It is mainly because of ignorance in respect to the real nature, origin and value to these high ideals and impulses, and ignorance in respect to this great law of our being which allows humanity to live at so low a level. Again, the influence of tobacco, liquor and many other unnatural usages and habits deprives man of the keen insight and relish for the advanced conceptions of duty and privi-

lege. In fact, there is so much of the abnormal that we have almost come to regard such indifference to the higher and the better things as our normal and natural condition and attitude of humanity.

The fundamental things in Christianity and Infinitism are identical, namely, they both point to, inculcate, and, if followed, begat the higher life in the individual in this life or our earthly existence. But Christianity reaches this higher life by the circuitous route as follows: It begins with the teaching that man is a fallen being, that God plans his redemption, that Christ in his death purchased his pardon, that man believing Christ to be his Saviour and accepting his atonement, is reconciled to God, adopted into the household of faith and is given of the spirit whereby he is directed and inspired, and if he follows said direction and leading he comes to the higher life.

Infinitism believes man instead of being a fallen creature to be a rising and aggressive creature. His sense of what is termed sin is his depreciation of his present attainments in view of the ever-present impulse to better things, which, if yielded to, leads to the same higher life.

Someone has said,

True ease in writing comes from art, not
chance,

As those move easiest who have learned to
dance.

I acknowledge this evident want of ease, but this is a short consideration of a great

subject, the sum and substance of which is to obey our best impressions to do right, etc.

This source of our sense of right may be termed God's voice, conscience or the Holy Spirit; it matters little what it is called as long as it is recognized and heeded. Its first leadings may not diverge much from our usual line of operation, but if faithfully followed it will lead to a new and higher life, the joy and blessedness of which the individual only can mark out for itself, and he only can appreciate its full blessing.

There is a saying that the proof of the pudding is in the eating of it. Accordingly, reader, do what is right. There is a farewell which we hear on every side. "Be good."

It is not the mission of Infinitism to form a new denomination or creed, but to put in action again that great transforming influence which revolutionized things in the early Christian centuries.

Some are looking for the second coming of Christ. We have not yet got the import of his first coming, and his second coming will be inaugurated when the spirit which actuated Christ is also the spirit which actuates humanity from centre to circumference, namely, his purpose to do always the will of his Father who was in heaven.

The Father in heaven was his idea of the source from which his inspiration came. The influence of the spirit is our conception. The real influence for righteousness is our own in-born sense of right and righteousness, everywhere existent, though often smothered out and neglected. There are many who realize the influence and recognize its importance,

but because there are so few who adopt this standard they refuse, knowing that they by so doing would be working at a disadvantage as far as temporal things are concerned. But this will fail to deter people from this higher life when it becomes a little more popular and better understood. Come on, boys; you have squandered enough time and money, and some of you prayers and penances, begin this day, and hour. Propose as this subject comes to your attention to do what you regard as right at every turn and you soon will begin to realize some of the realities of the higher life. Having proposed a manner of life and having personally tried it out, I have full confidence in its value.

You perhaps will not succeed at all times in doing what you regard as the right and proper thing any more than I have, but you will soon find that a comparatively small governing by this rule will yield very good results, and the more we conform to this rule of life the more we will be convinced that it is The Life.

April 5, 1916.

FINIS.

On December 27, 1916, I read the foregoing and find the import and tenure of Infinitism as previously written in harmony with my present views. But the intervening time and what it has brought strengthens my belief in Infinitism.

First, the great war has continued, in which Christian nations continue to kill and destroy beyond all previous record. This one thing shows conclusively that Christianity as held and practiced by the rank and file of those

who profess Christianity is not what its great teacher taught it to be. He taught us that we should love our enemies; he taught us that we should bless them that curse you and pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.

The present condition of things impress upon us how far short we have come of appropriating the example and exemplifying the great teacher's teachings and living the great teacher's life. If he wept over Jerusalem, how would he lament over the present prospects of humanity.

How supremely sad the spectacle of humanity, supposing Christ to be the incarnation of God and his words and teachings being the ultimate and last expression of the supreme intelligence and waiting in supine inaction for his second coming to correct and supplant and overrule. How much more reasonable to believe Jesus Christ as perhaps the first man to be born from above and he in his ecstasy and joy and enthusiasm to have enthused his followers with like obedience to known duty, which obedience, when put in practice by their tarrying at Jerusalem in prayer until Pentecost, when they became likewise elated and enthused and set about the mission of bringing all men to this knowledge of the higher life.

Christ did not understand it; the church for these many centuries has not understood it, but it has been granted unto me to understand the principle things and the main points in this higher life.

We should not believe in Christ's first com-

ing as an incarnation of God, but as a natural outcome of his life of obedience to duty and impressions made upon his own mind, and instead of idly waiting for his second coming to do great things for us, we should rather lay hold of the great truth of the higher life and work with earnestness to bring humanity to its own birthright, and if it should turn out that Christ should come again in person, there, of course, would be no harm done; but if, on the other hand, our Lord should delay his coming or not come at all, as anticipated, we then, nevertheless, will have brought the world to a knowledge of the higher life through right and sane methods all the same.

AGAIN.

December 9 I attended William Sunday's meeting in Boston. The 11th I wrote him to the effect that Jesus had come the second time and would begin preaching in the chapel at Harmony, R. I about the first Sunday in January, 1917. I had the letter registered and I received back a receipt, showing it was received by his Secretary, and that was all I received or expected. I regard Billy Sunday and his company as the last example of the old school. I was one of one thousand to go from Providence. There were two thousand from Worcester and five hundred and thousand lots from other places and sections of New England. Some fifteen thousand, more or less, at the afternoon meeting to see Mr. Sunday wave the flags of every nation of the earth, one after the other, in rapid succession, and to break with a hammer most of ten vases representing the ten commandments. This

was all right and proper, perhaps, but how does it all compare with Christ's words to the Pharisees when they asked him when the kingdom of God should come. He said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with outward show, neither shall they say, Lo here or lo there, for behold the kingdom of God is among you."

If a small part of the energy used by Mr. Sunday in trying to impress a plain truth, but encumbered with many things hard to be believed by some and impossible of belief by many, were left out, how much more natural and spiritual it all would be.

We need to understand better the true import of the first coming of Christ, or that first great awakening to the fact that there was such a thing as being born again.

That was what transformed men then and that and that only will transform them now, and it is just as natural as anything else in the whole universe. Man, of course, can not know of a certainty his own origin or destiny. As far as I know, all who write on the subject assume something, but it is of much importance what is assumed. I will assume, and this first assumption seems to have some reason for belief from what we observe at the present time.

The first is according to 1 Cor., 15-46: Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. This would lead us to assume that matter existed before spirit, and, in fact, what use could a spirit be without some medium or vehicle through which or by which it could work. I think our observation, aid-

ed by the inventions of man, reach to where we can almost see matter in far different condition than that which is nearby, and to some extent understood. All space might have been occupied by very light and even gaseous matter which had a nature and tendencies of its own. Some of its possible laws we think are apparent at this time, among which the laws of gravity, etc.

Matter through the duration of time changed and solidified more and more, but still leaving in space previously occupied something after the condensation took place. These changes, of which we know but little in early times carried on in a similar way perhaps in our own time, chemistry, geology, etc., seem to teach that such changes have been and still are in progress. Vegetable and animal life were the result and outcome of the changes which took place before there was any mind to comprehend their existence. Man, as far as we are capable of judging, is the most advanced of the natural, and that there are so many colors and various characters among men leads us to suppose that the changes by which man was ultimately produced were general throughout many sections of the earth, and thus men of far different characteristics.

December 28 began here.

The origin of man is, of course, a great question, one that formerly has been easily answered by saying God created him in his own image, that he fell from this original condition, hence sin and its consequences, which involve other questions, some of which are more complicated and harder to answer than

the original question, From whence came man?

Since my conception of his origin seems to fit in with what we do know respecting man as he is and has been as well as any, and does not necessitate any great contradictions, such as are the existence of sin, etc., it is offered for what it is worth until some more sensible and better working theory of man's origin is thought out, which new and better theory I would be as glad to accept as any one when its superiority is established. There is one quite suggestive thing which has recently come to my observation which I will mention even in this effort at a condensed setting forth of the origin and nature of things, namely, in the medical profession it is found some certain germs of diseases which are common to man can be conveyed or implanted in monkeys or apes but not into the common animals which are commonly used for such experiments.

I remember distinctly when a boy of 6 or 8 years a hand-organ man came along with a monkey, which much interested me, and a cousin the same age as myself was much carried away with it, and I remember his saying, "And the poor little thing did not have any soul." I suppose he was right, but perhaps his descendants some thousands of generations hence might have a soul.

In contrast with this I wish to speak of an incident which is said to have happened. A young man of good family was brought into court and one of the witnesses, an old aunt, said: "Judge, I want you to remember that he belongs to a very respectable family, and

the farther you go back the more respectable they are."

A person was once accused of being descendant from a horse thief and he replied, "I am glad you mentioned that fact, because I am proud of the fact that I am not a horse thief and our family is advancing."

So we see that there are straws blowing both ways.

But what you ask is the reason for the sad spectacle of many of the nations of the earth in this twentieth century being at war with each other, and how does that compare with your theory of progress or evolution. No institution should be judged by its perversions.

It is a hard thing to say, but still I think it comes pretty near the truth when we state that the young peoples' societies of the various churches, the Salvation Army, the Y. M. C. A. and many of the churches have so far neglected the plain demands of truth and righteousness that the world has forgotten these plain essentials which are the prerequisites of the higher life and of being born from above. "The voice of the People is the voice of God," is an old saying, and never more true than now. Man must again become awakened by the voice of conscience and arise to newness of life. But I am extending this far beyond the desired limit.

A few words respecting the surroundings of the writing of *Infinitism*. I can look from my window on the third floor at the store, post office and Town Clerk's office building, out across Greenville Pond, Slack's Reservoir, up on to the hill where my grandfather's grandfather lived and is buried—the second Rev. Samuel Winsor. He was once pastor of the First Baptist Church

in Providence, which position he left when he withdrew with many members and built a house of worship on what is now Plainfield street, Providence, and is next to the Catholic Church and is now owned by them. Said Rev. Samuel Winsor was a great-grandson of Roger Williams. I could go a few miles to where my mother's mother is buried, who was a descendant from Chad Brown and Obediah Holmes. Thus in every direction I run across the final resting places of those who were the founders of this little State, where Liberty of conscience was one of the cornerstones of its foundation. Roger Williams, after organizing this First Church, is said to have withdrawn from it and to have called himself a seeker. I do not know if he ever found what he sought, but if he did not I have found it. *Eureka.*

I am sitting on an oak chair which I as Master of Greenville Grange, No. 37, P. and H., have occupied for the last two years, and which chair along with the regalias, charter, badges, flag and manuals I saved from the fire one week ago last Saturday at 6 P. M., and said chair at my request was granted to me at the last meeting of our Grange.

I am boarding myself, own no land and have but little of this world's goods, which, all told, would not bring over three hundred dollars at public auction.

So much for the temporal surroundings. But how about the spiritual temper and surroundings?

First—Where did the departure from the regular belief begin?

This took place while in the Theological Seminary at Lewiston, Maine, 1884 to 1889. We had

been studying the atonement and had considered all of the several theories and the objections thereto, when our instructor in conclusion said, as I remember it: "There is no theory of the atonement against which valid objections cannot be made. I advise you, young men, to construct a theory of the atonement for yourselves, but I warn you beforehand that you will not think out any theory that has not already been thought out and also successfully refuted."

My thoughts then were: If there is no theory of the atonement that cannot be successfully defended at least in theory, then there can be no honest theology with the doctrine of the atonement in it, not even in theory and much less in practice. And from then on to the present time I have for these nearly thirty years been thinking upon this subject, comparing Spiritual things with Spiritual.

From time to time I have written out some of my thoughts on this subject, some of which my wife read some years ago, and they had some influence probably in her compelling me to leave my home, which was in her name, and getting a divorce from me on the grounds of excessive cruelty and failure to provide, as the newspaper clipping said, which was the first I knew of the divorce being granted, said clipping being given to me by one of my customers. The legality of the proceedings I would like to have some interested party some time look into, preferably after I am dead. Be that as it may, I had to get out of the house or go to jail, and I chose the former, which I did November 23, 1912. I bought a round trip ticket to Jacksonville, Florida, and started November 26th.

I suppose I was about as bitter as anyone very

well could be. I had a set expression of curses with many adjectives which I repeated continually. I finally began to drop off one after another of the adjectives. Reasoning this way, that a soul could not be black, rotten, stinking and nasty, and again I was not so certain about there being a hell to which it was possible to consign such a soul. Be that as it may, I have found much consolation in conforming to my original formula with the adjectives left off.

Thus was hate uppermost in my mind, until one certain day in answer to a simple business letter which could easily have been answered by a postal, I received a letter addressed to Rev. Irving Winsor, and on the back a Red Cross Christmas stamp. The Rev. signified respect, and the Red Cross stamp love. As I walked from the post office with that letter I became a changed person; tears flowed like water. I said, there are those who respect and love me, and came back January 1, 1913, and took up the burden of life even with a heavy heart.

Since then hate has not predominated at least. But with what spirit can one write and advocate a doctrine. So, contrary to the generally accepted ideas, "All the way to Calvary he went for me."

Jesus shall reign where e'er the sun
Does his successive journey run.
"His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more."

These were the two hymns with which I involuntarily began my day's writing on this the closing lines of Infinitism. Friends, Jesus has become a personification of truth and righteousness,

and justly so. He was the great standard-bearer. He first experienced the new birth. He told Nicodemus more than he by study had found.

The fact of the higher life and new birth, new to Jesus, thrilling his soul, was the great revelation of his day.

Extravagant ideas and misconceptions on the part of Jesus and an unwillingness on the part of his followers to yield a loyal obedience to know duty resulted in all those sad experiences which terminated in the Cross.

But Christ, by that high prerogative of a person born from above, appeared to his Disciples after his death in a manner new then, but one which should be more common now than it is. He walked with them to Emeaus. He called for the Disciples and Peter; he is even said to have appeared to about five hundred at one time. Such is the prerogatives of a man born from above after he is relieved of his body of flesh and bones. Yes, when his followers, after ten days of prayer, were born again, all in one bunch, then it was the Disciples began to realize, as never before, the meaning of the talk to Nicodemus as exemplified in Christ's own life.

Here, then, is the superior teaching of Infinitism. The person born again or from above, by a life of devotion and righteousness, becomes a part and parcel of the spiritual kingdom of which Jesus Christ was the first member, our elder brother, and we, by conformity to the same rule and manner of life which he followed, come into the same spiritual relationship. It is not haphazard, it is not by profession of faith, it is not by the application of the blood of the Son of God. It is straight doing of righteousness, a

committal of one's self to the life of being led by our own consciousness of what we ought to do that buys the transformation, and if you do not believe it, just try it and see for yourself.

January 1, 1917, new pen.

The question might be asked, What do you expect from the writing of Infinitism? I expect just what happened when the Gospel was first preached by Jesus and his Disciples. It then revolutionized and changed humanity, in spite of the accompanying mysteries which are said to accompany its first introduction. We now need to dwell upon the principal thing, which is the same now as then and will be in the future, which main truth may be expressed in very few words, as follows:

There exists in the normal human being a sense of what ought to be, which is just as surely a part of his nature as any other part of his nature, and this sense of what ought to be and the following out of its leadings, even in a limited degree, gives a reward in a sense of satisfaction well worth having, but when the same sense of what ought to be is invariably followed, it leads to such ecstasy in joy and peace as knows no limits. Such was the experience of Jesus, who first, as he expressed it, said, "I do always those things that please him."

It was his remarkable success along this line which made his superiority over us. He thought he was doing the will of a Father in Heaven, but we know he was living according to the law of his being. He is our elder brother, and we should do as he did. What a glorious example of devotion to duty. So much so, that he in his ecstasy, when nearing his end, said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to the Father, and he shall

presently give me more than twelve legions of angels." And so much so that his followers deified him, and because of his appearance after his crucifixion, preached his resurrection, and many other things which have beclouded and obliterated the principal thing about his whole life, that it is necessary to rid it of many of these superfluous things that we may see the true import of the coming of Christ, namely, a conformity to duty as made clear to every man. During the last nineteen centuries Christians have to such an extent dwelt upon the side issues, so that the main thing has become one of the many debatable questions.

The natural growth and development of that inward sense of duty has been relegated to a minor position, of simply obeying or not obeying a conscience, which if unenlightened was of minor importance, whereas it is the whole thing.

Infinitism enthrones the doing of the dictates of conscience. Some one has said, "Right forever in the dungeon, wrong forever on the throne" can no longer be said. Right must rule, and its rule of righteousness and truth is the glad herald of the good day coming. People in their ignorance today are afraid to do right and take their chances, but the future will see right becoming more and more popular as its great blessings are more and more realized and exemplified. "I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread." Such was David's testimony. It is righteousness, not an imputed righteousness nor a righteousness in the future, but a righteousness of our own, here and now. Take a hand in it and see if you are not more than satisfied. Such is the outline of Infinitism.

We hope that this idea will fill one heart and one life after another until we have that righteousness which exalteth a nation as well as an individual. Amen.

Written March 6, 1917.

Since writing the foregoing, three different things have been brought to my attention which may consistently become a part of Infinitism and in fact make a little more clear the true import of Infinitism. First, after writing the foregoing I had a conversation with one of the Providence pastors on the subject. He said, have you written out your views on the subject. I said yes, but I hardly think you could read it. Afterward I found it was quite readable, and I brought the first writing in to him. He said he read it with interest and said he would buy a copy if I had it printed. He also made the remark that no one could be expected to bring out a whole and complete theory or plan of things.

It is this remark of his to which I take exceptions. I have said in another place that I did not claim Infinitism as complete, but that it could be added to or taken from as truth and knowledge in their advancement seemed to make necessary, but whereas that statement is correct, I still believe that the secret of Infinitism is complete and whole in itself and, like the law of gravity in the physical world, which accounts for many things, still has some inconsistencies. So Infinitism, in the spiritual and religious world, when once comprehended will rightly account for all things, and that consistently, even if, as in the natural, some things seem to revolve in the opposite direction from what would be expected. It is a saying that "A few exceptions are needed to prove the rule."

The second thing I wish to consider is the fact that there is much said about the second coming of Christ. I recognize that the introduction of Infinitism and its acceptance will put on foot changes which will be somewhat similar to those which attended the coming of Christ at the beginning of our era.

While considering these things in their true light, I was impressed by my pastor saying, "Christ has not come the second time; we hear no on esaying 'I am Christ.'"

While weighing all these things in their true light, and considering just what place I occupied and what part the teachings of Infinitism had, I will admit that I became much exercised. I seemed to see and understand things in a clearer light than usual. Some might say that they heard a voice and not very much overstate the matter. But it was conveyed to my mind this intelligence, "This is all that there ever will be to the second coming of Christ."

These two considerations of this subject are both recent, and from modesty or a fear of overstating things have thus far been withheld, but I think that the circumstances of the case require that they should be known, even at the expense of an unsolicited prominence of your humble servant.

The third and last thing which I will mention is a remarkable incident. Some ten or twelve years ago, when, for the protection of my throat, I allowed my beard to grow, one day while sitting at a table eating dinner where I at that time was taking some meals away from my home, the lady of the house, a devout Catholic lady, said to me, "Mr. Winsor, you look like my blessed Lord." I of course was surprised, but have kept

the saying in my mind all these years, and the other day I called on the lady and asked her if she remembered the incident, and she said, "I most certainly do."

And she went on to say that she had an ideal of what Christ looked like and that I reminded her of that ideal.

I do not know whether Infinitism and the truth will be strengthened by the mention of these three supplementary incidents, but they seemed so germane to the general subject that I did not consider the presentation of the subject complete without them, hence their insertion in Infinitism.

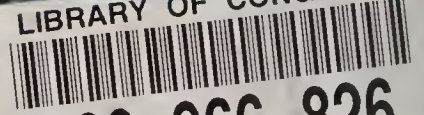
Thus we will leave this little book with one large subject in a needy world.

IRVING WINSOR.

Greenville, R. I., March 6, 1917.



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